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TEXAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

House Membership

Representative Juan Manuel Escobar



Biographical Information

Juan Manuel Escobar was born and raised in Escobares, Texas, a small ranching community in Starr County, on March 11, 1950. He is a direct descendant of Jose Maria Escobar, who founded the Escobares settlement in 1753. The oldest of five children, Juan Manuel is the son of Filomeno Escobar, a career Navy veteran of World War II, Korea, and the Vietnam conflict and the late Rosita Vera Escobar who imparted invaluable virtues of honor, honesty, and love of country, and instilled a strong work ethic in all her children.

Juan Escobar attended school in Roma, Texas. In high school, he was a stellar student-athlete, participating in basketball and track and field. A member of the Roma High School basketball team, he received All-State honors in 1969. He was also a member of the track and field team that went to the state finals in 1968. He was president of the student council during his senior year and graduated among the top ten students in his class from Roma High School in 1969. In 1995, he was inducted into the Roma Independent School District Hall of Honor.

After graduation, he enlisted in the United States Marine Corps, choosing to serve his country at the time of the Vietnam conflict, before continuing his education. He served with the 1st Marine Division in the Republic of Vietnam where he was wounded in action in 1970. He rose to the rank of Staff Sergeant. Upon recovering from his wounds and returning to the continental United States, he married his sweetheart, the former Maria del Rosario (Rosie) Gonzalez of Rio Grande City. Afterwards, he was assigned to the prestigious U.S. Marine Corps Presidential Honor Guard in Washington, D.C. where the newlyweds made their home until the end of his tour in 1973 when he was honorably discharged.

They returned to South Texas and the Rio Grande Valley and he enrolled at Pan American University in Edinburg, Texas. He was certified as

a peace officer in 1975 and worked as a Starr county deputy sheriff while in college. He attained his Bachelor of Science degree in 1978, majoring in Biology. After graduation, he resolved to give back to his community and began working as an algebra teacher and football coach at Rio Grande City High School.

In 1978, he joined the U.S. Border Patrol and graduated from the United States Border Patrol Academy in Glynco, Georgia in 1979. His first assignment was in Falfurrias, Texas as a Border Patrol Agent. After 6 years in Falfurrias, he rose to the rank of Senior Agent and was assigned to the Kingsville office where he served for 9 years, attaining the position of "Patrol Agent in Charge". While in Falfurrias and in Kingsville, he was involved in numerous community and church groups, and served as a school board trustee in both communities for over thirteen years. His exceptional service with the Border Patrol led to his promotion to Senior Special Agent with the Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force, an undercover unit of the Department of Justice that specialized in illegal drug interdiction work. He retired from the Department of Homeland Security in 2003 with the grade of GS-13.

Juan M. Escobar sought the office of State Representative, District 43 in a special election to fill the unexpired term of the late State Representative Irma Rangel in April 2003. He led a field of eight candidates in a district that encompasses Kleberg, Kenedy, Jim Hogg, Brooks, Willacy, and the northern part of Cameron County including South Padre Island, and was duly elected to represent that district in a special runoff election between the top two candidates held on May 6, 2003.

Being sworn in less than four weeks before the end of the 78th Legislature may have made his transition into the legislature a difficult one, yet Representative Escobar still had a productive month as a state legislator. During that short span, he continued to sponsor bills originated by Representative Rangel, as well as bills authored by other legislators that impacted his constituency. He successfully networked with colleagues from both parties, establishing excellent contacts and friendships. The hands-on legislative experience that he gained was put to good use in the three special sessions called by the Governor during the summer of 2003. He helped pass Senate Bill 25, which created the Kenedy County Groundwater Conservation District, and amended a bill to continue the existence of the State Office of Administrative Hearings and to require that office to provide translators or interpreters when needed.

Representative Escobar was unopposed in the 2004 primary elections as the Democratic Party candidate for District 43 State Representative. He was re-elected by a wide margin over his Republican challenger in the General Election on November 3, 2004. He took his oath of office on January 11, 2005 to begin his 2nd term in the 79th Legislature.

Representative Escobar lives in Kingsville, Texas with Rosie, his wife of 33 years. They have two grown children, Yvonne Yvette Escobar (Bonnie), and Eduardo Eden Escobar (Eddie) who now reside in San Antonio, Texas.

Special Achievements

- Awarded the Purple Heart Medal for wounds in action in Vietnam
- Awarded the Combat Action Ribbon
- Awarded the Presidential Unit Citation, the Meritorious Unit Citation, the Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry (1st Class), the Republic of Vietnam Service Medal, the Republic of Vietnam Campaign Medal (with three stars), Good Conduct Medal, and the National Defense ribbon.
- Key service with the Presidential Honor Guard, Marine Barracks, Washington, D.C:

- Pallbearer for President Lyndon B. Johnson
- Pallbearer for President Harry S. Truman
- Pallbearer for J. Edgar Hoover, Director of the FBI
- Pallbearer for Lt. General Lewis Burwell "Chesty" Puller
- Pallbearer for General Alexander Vandergrift, Congressional Medal of Honor recipient and former Commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps.
- White House detail
- Pentagon detail
- Tomb of the Unknown Soldier detail
- Veterans of Foreign War, life member
- Disabled American Veterans, life member
- Military Order of the Purple Heart, life member
- V.F.W. Post 7634 Commander, Falfurrias, Texas 1982-1986
- Parent Teacher Association President, Falfurrias, Texas 1984-1985
- Brooks County Appraisal District Chairman, 1985-1988
- Brooks County Independent School District (ISD) Trustee, 1985-1988
- Brooks County ISD Board of Trustees President, 1987-1988
- Knights of Columbus, St. Martin Council 2623, Kingsville, Texas 1988-Present
- Parent Teacher Association President, Central Cluster, Kingsville, Texas 1989-1991
- Private Industry Council, Coastal Bend of Texas, Member, 1990-1993
- Knights of Columbus, Fourth Degree, Kingsville Assembly 1303, 1992-Present
- Texas Workforce Commission, Coastal Bend of Texas, Member, 1997-2000
- St. Joseph's Catholic Church Administrator, Kingsville, Texas, 2002
- Kingsville Independent School District Trustee, 1989-94 & 1997-2003
- Kingsville ISD Board of Trustees President, 1990-1993 & 1998-2003
- Texas State Bar Ethic Committee, Member, 2001-2003
- Kingsville Record News, Newsmaker of the Year, 2004
- Coastal Bend Pharmacy Association, Irma Rangel Award of Excellence, 2005
- Texas Association of Mexican American Chamber Commerce Legislative Award, 2005
- City of Harlingen Honorary Citizen of 2005
- Texas House of Representatives, 2003-Present
- Committees:
 - Border & International Affairs, 2003-2004
 - Land & Resources Management, 2003-Present
 - Criminal Jurisprudence, 2005

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